

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Currently Amended): A method of evaluating sound quality on image forming apparatus, comprising ~~the steps of~~:

collecting a sound caused from image forming apparatus at a location apart a certain distance from said image forming apparatus;

measuring a plurality of psychoacoustic parameter parameters of the collected sound;

deriving a subjective evaluation value from the collected sound through a subjective evaluation;

subjecting said measured plurality of psychoacoustic parameter parameters and the subjective value to a multiple regression analysis;

computing a sound quality evaluative equation for assuming a subjective evaluation value, based on a result from the multiple regression analysis, using said plurality of psychoacoustic parameter parameters; and

computing a proper range of the subjective evaluation value assumed by the sound quality evaluative equation in said image forming apparatus.

Claim 2 (Original): An image forming apparatus characterized by a discomfort index, S, which satisfies  $S < -0.5$ , wherein the discomfort index S is calculated with the following sound quality evaluative equation (a), using a loudness value and a tonality value, both psychoacoustic parameters obtained from the sound from said image forming apparatus at a location apart a certain distance from an end of said image forming apparatus:

$$S = A \times (\text{Loudness value}) + B \times (\text{Tonality value}) + C \quad \dots (a)$$

where coefficients A, B and C are determined

$$0.247 \leq A \leq 0.380$$

$$2.075 \leq B \leq 4.890$$

$$-3.649 \leq C \leq -2.643$$

Claim 3 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the coefficients are determined  $A = 0.3135$ ,  $B = +3.4824$  and  $C = -3.1460$ .

Claim 4 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the plurality of psychoacoustic parameters, obtained from the sound from said image forming apparatus at a location apart a certain distance from ~~an end of~~ said image forming apparatus, satisfy conditions including a sharpness value  $\leq 2.70$  acum, a roughness value  $\leq 1.24$  asper and a fluctuation strength value  $\leq 1.31$  vacil.

Claim 5 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, at least comprising:

an image carrier for forming an image thereon; and

a charging unit which applies an AC bias to charge said image carrier, wherein the AC bias has a frequency,  $f$ , which satisfies  $200 \text{ Hz} < f$ .

Claim 6 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising a charging sound reduction unit which reduces a charging sound caused during charging from said charging unit to said image carrier.

Claim 7 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 6, wherein said charging sound reduction unit comprises a frequency shifter provided on said image carrier

for shifting the eigen frequency of said image carrier to a frequency different from a frequency obtained by multiplying the frequency  $f$  of the AC bias by a natural number.

Claim 8 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 7, wherein said frequency shifter comprises a high-stiffness member for preventing said image carrier from vibrating, a sound absorber for absorbing a sound from said image carrier, or a damper for preventing said image carrier from vibrating.

Claim 9 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, at least comprising:

an image carrier for forming an image thereon; and

a charging unit which applies a voltage to charge said image carrier, wherein said charging unit charges said image carrier using a DC bias.

Claim 10 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, at least comprising:

an image carrier for forming an image thereon; and

an image writing unit which writes an image on said image carrier using a polygon mirror and a motor for rotationally driving said mirror, said image writing unit including

a housing unit constructing a closed space for housing said motor and said polygon mirror therein,

an opening formed in a portion of a side wall constructing said housing unit, and

a sound absorbent chamber provided outside said housing unit and in communication with the opening.

Claim 11 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said sound absorbent chamber has a resonant frequency resonating with a frequency of a motor sound depending on the number of revolutions of said motor.

Claim 12 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 10, wherein said sound absorbent chamber has a resonant frequency resonating with a frequency of a wind-hurting sound caused from revolutions of said polygon mirror.

Claim 13 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 2, wherein the certain distance is determined as  $1.00 \pm 0.03$ .

Claim 14 (Currently Amended): An image forming apparatus characterized by a discomfort index, S, which satisfies  $S < -0.448$ , wherein the discomfort index S is calculated with the following sound quality evaluative equation (e), using a sound pressure level (A characteristic) and, a sharpness value or a plurality of psychoacoustic parameter parameters obtained from the sound from said image forming apparatus at a location apart a certain distance from an end of said image forming apparatus:

$$S = A \times (\text{Sound pressure level}) + B \times (\text{Sharpness value}) + C \quad \dots (e)$$

where coefficients A, B and C are determined

$$0.066 \leq A \leq 0.120$$

$$0.342 \leq B \leq 0.709$$

$$-7.611 \leq C \leq -4.776$$

Claim 15 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the coefficients are determined  $A = 0.093$ ,  $B = 0.525$  and  $C = -6.194$ .

Claim 16 (Currently Amended): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the plurality of psychoacoustic parameters, obtained from the sound from said image forming apparatus at a location apart a certain distance from an end of said image forming apparatus, satisfy conditions including a loudness value  $\leq 9.00$  (sone), a tonality value  $\leq 0.08$  (tu), a roughness value  $\leq 1.65$  (asper), a relative approach  $\leq 0.32$  and an impulsiveness  $\leq 0.48$  (iu).

Claim 17 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, at least comprising:

a paper conveying unit which conveys a recording paper, said paper conveying unit including

a guide member for guiding said recording paper, said guide member composed of a flexible sheet, said flexible sheet having a tip roundly folded for contacting with said recording paper.

Claim 18 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, at least comprising:

a paper conveying unit which conveys a recording paper, said paper conveying unit including

a guide member for guiding said recording paper, said guide member composed of a flexible sheet, said flexible sheet having a contact portion bent at an end for contacting with said recording paper.

Claim 19 (Original): The image forming apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the certain distance is determined as  $1.00 \pm 0.03$ .